

Lower Mississippi Delta Region

HERITAGE STUDY

Newsletter 3 • September 1998

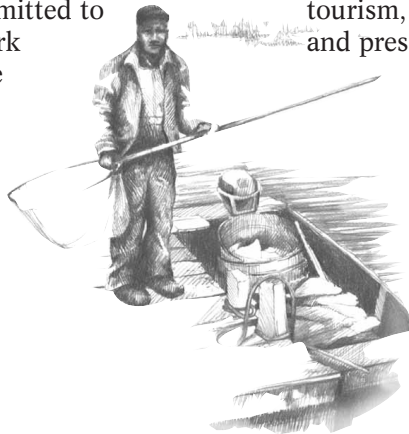
INTRODUCTION

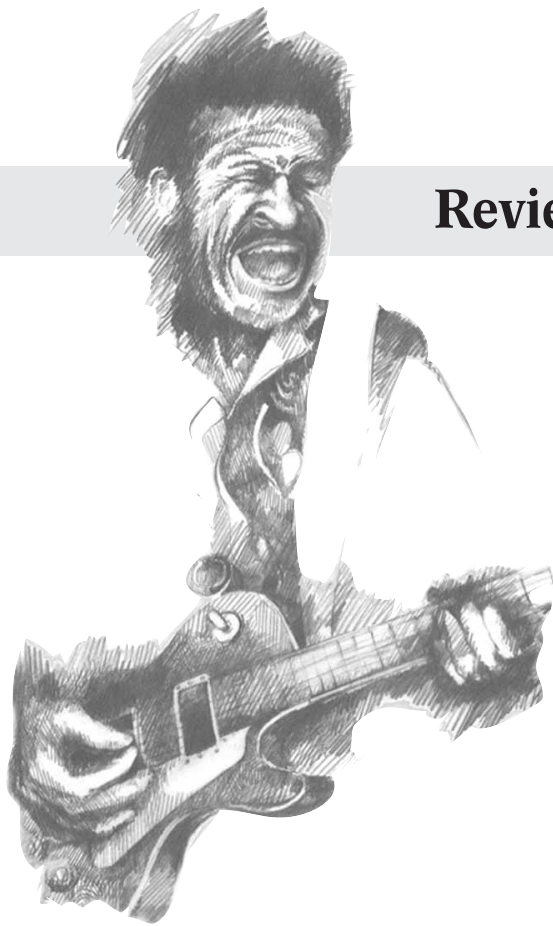
The National Park Service is pleased to announce the completion of the *Lower Mississippi Delta Region Heritage Study*. As directed by Congress in 1994, the Park Service has now completed a study of the Delta's cultural, natural, and recreational resources. This newsletter is the final document related to the heritage study and has a threefold purpose: (1) to review the study process, (2) to present a summary of public comments received during the draft document review period, and (3) to correct technical errors and make changes to the draft document.

Due to the low number and nature of the comments received on the draft document (volume I), it would be neither cost effective nor efficient to revise or reprint a final document. This newsletter is being sent to local, state, and federal agencies, academic institutions, and community organizations as a final communication between the planning team and the people of the Delta. All three segments of the study will also be made available on the Internet at <http://www.nps.gov/planning>. The completed study will be transmitted to Congress through the National Park Service Washington Office and the secretary of the interior.

The key to success for this heritage study has been development of close ties and effective working relationships among National Park Service personnel, state, local, and federal entities; tribal governments; private nonprofit organizations; academic institutions; communities; and individuals living in the Delta region. All these groups have shown their deep and abiding interest in and concern for the future of the Delta. Public interest in the *Lower Mississippi Delta Region Heritage Study*, through participation at public meetings, responses to comment forms, and comments on the draft document have helped make this project successful.

It is our hope that Congress will consider, and act, on those concepts and alternatives it feels would be most beneficial to the Delta. In addition, federal, state, tribal, and local governments as well as academic institutions and other interest groups should determine which concepts and alternatives they can implement. It will take a true partnership of all parties in the Delta region to boost heritage tourism, thereby improving economic conditions and preserving this region's rich heritage.





Review of the Study Process

Our first newsletter was published in October 1994 and included information on why the heritage study was being conducted, its objectives, what the study hoped to accomplish, and how those interested could participate in the planning effort.

On June 4, 5, and 6, 1996, 25 experts on the people, history, culture, economy, and natural environment of the Lower Mississippi Delta gathered in Memphis, Tennessee. Their purpose was to identify the key stories and some of the sites that make this region of the country worthy of national recognition and attention.

That symposium produced a framework of stories, or themes, that form a complex yet cohesive picture of the Delta's natural, prehistoric, historical, and cultural resources. This thematic framework — the Stories of the Delta — served as the foundation for the heritage study and were used to develop the ten concepts (possible configurations of resources that could aid resource preservation efforts and enhance the visitor experience in the Delta) presented in the heritage study.

In December 1996 the planning team held 27 meetings across the Delta to solicit from Delta residents their ideas on the important people, places, and events of the Delta. The information received at the public meetings along with responses to newsletters, comments on the Internet Web page, as well as meetings and discussions with numerous local governments and agencies were also used to formulate the heritage study.

A second newsletter was published in April 1997, which summarized information received at the 27 public meetings held in the Delta. That newsletter summarized the findings of a museum survey prepared under contract for the National Park Service as well as spoke about work that was being done by graduate students at the University of Mississippi. The newsletter also presented additional opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process through a written response form.

In addition to gathering comments through public meetings, newsletters, and a Web page, the study team met with representatives of American Indian and African-American communities to discuss ideas for meeting the intent of section 1104 of the Lower Mississippi Delta Region Initiatives legislation. In all, more than 700 Delta residents attended meetings, responded to requests for stories and sites, or made comments via newsletter response forms.

The museum survey mentioned above was conducted by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities under contract to the National Park Service. The goal of the survey of museum organizations throughout the Delta was to help determine the nature and level of permanent exhibitions that interpret aspects of Delta culture. A total of 714 surveys were mailed to established and mid-size museums as well as emerging ones. There were 349 museums that responded to the survey, which allowed a good analysis of data and gave a good snapshot of the museum community in the Delta.

In addition to the museum survey, the National Park Service contracted with the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi to conduct a survey of sites not listed on the National Register of Historic Places but which could have an important part to play in portraying to visitors the unique character of the Delta. Seven graduate students participated in the survey, which uncovered a rich and varied array of private and publicly owned sites across the seven-state region.

After extensive public involvement and meetings with local, state, and federal agency representa-

tives, the study team assembled and sorted the data from all sources, formulated concepts and management alternatives, analyzed the environmental impacts of the alternatives, and produced a draft document. During the fall of 1997 the document was reviewed within the National Park Service by park, regional, and Washington staff, and in December 1997 team members met again with partners from state agencies, academic institutions, and study partners to review the document and receive their comments. In early 1998 the document was revised and released to the public for review in March.



Summary of Public Comments

This section provides a summary of comments received through letters, faxes, and e-mail following the release of the *Draft Lower Mississippi Delta Region Heritage Study / Environmental Assessment* on March 30, 1998. Approximately 1,500 copies of the document were originally distributed to federal, state, county, parish, and city agencies, private groups and organizations, and individual citizens throughout the region. Soon after the document was released for public review, the National Park Service received 114 requests for additional copies of the document as well as requests from those who desired copies but were not part of the initial mailing.

The document's 30-day review period ended April 30, 1998. However, after receiving several requests from the public and members of Congress to extend the review period, the review period was formally extended an additional 60 days, until July 1, 1998, though written comments were accepted through July 17.

The National Park Service received a total of 66 written responses regarding the draft study, of which 34 came from individual



None of the alternatives given is acceptable. It looks like another land grab and "taking" with no compensation for private property owners. . . . This would give new federal power in seven states, and that is unacceptable. . . . On behalf of people everywhere who are sick of these land grabs and who have been hustled by the Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior, I protest this plan for the Lower Mississippi Delta Region.

Laura Weaver, Nevada

1

Please quit trying to take control of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and land. According to your draft, this project started in 1988. How much money was already wasted. . . . How much money spent on this so far could have been given to colleges and museums and could have been used in a productive way instead of continued "welfare" for federal workers to keep busy?

Glenn E. Beall, Nebraska

2

I have been opposed to this plan from its inception. I continue to believe that this plan will eventually lead to federal control and regulation of public, but more importantly private land. I do feel that the intentions are honorable, but am convinced that this is only a vehicle being used by the government to gain access to our land by means other than pure takeover. The state and local governments can do more than an adequate job of developing heritage tourism without intervention of the federal government.

Natalie Petzoldt, Missouri

3

Please inform your management that I am opposed to the content and objectives of this draft. . . . I object to any control at the Federal level and appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. I object to any control of Arkansas property, private and state owned, by the federal government. I object to 15 Million dollars of taxpayer funds being used for this project.

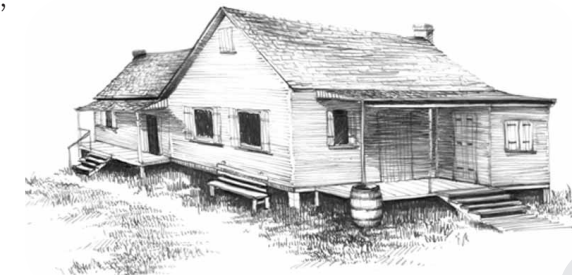
Representative Jim Milum
House of Representatives
Arkansas

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In addition, respondents from five Arkansas counties — Searcy, Pike, Montgomery, Newton, and Fulton — enclosed copies of recently enacted Interim Land Use Policy Plan ordinances, excluding their counties from the Lower Mississippi Delta region study area. The Dent County, Missouri, chapter of the People for the USA! wrote that they had recently instituted an interim state and federal land use plan and Oregon County, Missouri, had taken similar actions.

Although the National Park Service recognizes the concerns of these citizens, it conducted this study at the direction of Congress as outlined in the Lower Mississippi Delta Initiatives legislation. The legislation was passed as an economic revitalization through the heritage tourism initiative and is not intended to compromise private interests in the Delta. There is no intent on the part of the National Park Service nor on the part of the Department of the Interior to adversely impact any private landowner or resident of the Delta region.

Six of the 32 respondents who objected to the heritage study identified alternative D, "Sharing the Delta Heritage in the 21st Century," as their preferred alternative



The Lower Mississippi Delta Region study is the type of educational material we need today. The study factually informs of groups of people living and surviving together, yet maintaining their own cultures. The proposed centers will provide the necessary link between the existing historical sites, the regions (sic) forefathers and the children living within the Delta today. This study's Resource Descriptions should be displayed in each center to provide the general public with a vehicle to travel throughout the Delta and "see" its heritage.

Nan Wayne, Arkansas

5

We do support and endorse this study to enhance tourism within the region and especially in the State of Louisiana. This federal project will provide the critical seed money to enhance the region's tourism and generate additional revenues for the Delta Region.

Keith P. Fontenot, Louisiana

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because a "no action" alternative was not offered and alternative D would be the least intrusive and expensive of the four.

Fifteen of the 66 respondents, or 23%, expressed approval of the heritage study. Comments 5-7 below are representative of comments received approving of the study.

Three of the respondents who approved of the heritage study also endorsed a specific alternative. One respondent recommended alternative B and two recommended alternative C.

Finally, 19 of the 66 respondents (or 29%) expressed neither approval nor disapproval of the heritage study. Ten of these respondents requested either additional copies of the document or an extension of the comment period. Nine of the respondents provided either additional resource information or corrections for inaccuracies in the text or maps. The following section lists the corrections and/or changes to the text and maps made in volume I.

A great deal of work has certainly gone into this study, and the cause is worthy. . . . Although everyone agrees all the states and the federal government need to do something, as you might expect, there is disagreement on just what that "something" ought to be. In most cases, we find little disagreement with the ideas in any of the alternatives, but the question becomes which ones are the most practical, and which have the best chance of being accomplished. . . . We must admit a certain amount of impatience with studies. . . . The worst thing we could do would be to select an alternative that has little or any chance of implementation. We then would have spent even more money for studies, and not have anything on the ground again.

Richard W. Davies
Department of Parks and Tourism, Arkansas

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Revisions to Volume I of the Heritage Study

Revisions to the *Draft Lower Mississippi Delta Region Heritage Study / Environmental Assessment* (volume I) are listed below. These revisions were made in response to comments from public and agency reviews of the draft study. Substantive modifications were not made; therefore an additional environmental analysis is not required.

STORIES OF THE DELTA

Page 10

- Second column, line 4, change: 5,000 to 10,000.

Page 11

- First column, Delta Cultures, first bullet, change: 14,000 to 12,000.

COMPREHENSIVE CONCEPT — STORIES OF THE DELTA

Page 20

- First column, Natural Resources, add: Westvaco-Columbus Bottom Wildlife Management Area (Frankfort, Kentucky) and Clement Mineral Collection (Marion, Kentucky)
- First column, Delta Cultures and Cultural Expressions, American Indian, add: Parkin Archeological State Park (Parkin, Arkansas) and Hampson Museum State Park (Wilson, Arkansas)
- Second column, African-American Culture, add: Delta Cultural Center (Helena, Arkansas)
- Second column, Other Cultural Influences, add Delta Cultural Center (Helena, Arkansas) and
- American Quilter's Society (Paducah, Kentucky)
- Second column, Social and Political Influences, add Arkansas Territorial Restoration (Little Rock, Arkansas) and Old State House Museum (Little Rock, Arkansas)

Page 24

- First column, under National Forests, no. 10, change: Arkansas to Missouri

CONCEPT 1— NATURAL RESOURCES: THE HEART OF THE DELTA

Page 38

- Second column, Other Cultures, replace sentence 10 to read: There were two waves of Irish

immigrants to the Delta region. The first was the Scotts-Irish (Appalachian Uplanders) who came to the region in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The second was the Irish Catholics (directly from Ireland) who came to the region in the middle of the 19th century.

CONCEPT 4 :THE PEOPLE — ENCOUNTERING THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION

Page 40

- First column, American Indian Cultures, add Parkin Archeological State Park (Parkin, Arkansas)
- First column, Cajun Culture, add: Acadian Heritage and Culture Foundation Inc. (Erath, Louisiana)
- Second column, African-American Culture, add: Central High Museum (Little Rock, Arkansas); Warren Thomas Museum (Hickman, Kentucky); and Burks' Chapel A.M.E. Church (Paducah, Kentucky)
- Second column, Other Cultural Influences, add: Saint Mary's of the Barrens (Perryville, Missouri); Ellsinore Pioneer Museum (Ellsinore, Missouri); North Delta Museum (Friars Point, Mississippi); Paducah's William Clark Market House Museum (Paducah, Kentucky); Alben W. Barkley Museum (Paducah, Kentucky); Whitehaven (Paducah, Kentucky); and Pennyroyal Museum (Hopkinsville, Kentucky)

Page 43

- First column, Importance/Significance, first line, change four thousand to five thousand

Page 48

- First column, under Arkansas, change: location of Philander Smith College to Little Rock

Page 52

- Battles and Skirmishes, under Missouri, add 12 to Battle of Belmont in Missouri (in addition to Kentucky)

Page 62

- First column, Resources, under Arkansas, add: Crowley's Ridge Scenic Byway
- Second column, under Louisiana, change 51 to Southern Forest Heritage Museum and Research Center

Page 122

- No. 14, under Description: change to Remnant of vast swamp that once covered much of the Missouri

Page 122

- No. 17, under Description: change to Narrow ridge of forested hills that rises above the Delta of northeastern Arkansas, created by wind-carried soil between 50,000 and 12,000 years ago

Page 124

- No. 4, under Description: change to Remnant of vast swamp that once covered much of Missouri

Page 133

- No. 12, under Description: change 1890 to 1866

Page 141

- No. 12, under Location, add Kentucky
- No. 12, under name, add Columbus

Page 145

- No. 1, under Location: change Helen to Helena

APPENDIX B: PARALLEL EFFORTS**Addition: Cypress Sawmill Museum (Patterson, Louisiana)**

This museum is in the planning stages. It is located in Patterson, Louisiana, off Rt. 90, the major artery that runs through Cajun country. The museum will focus on the history and culture of the cypress lumbering industry in Louisiana from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. The museum will help preserve in memory a natural resource that has been almost entirely lost.

Addition: The River Heritage Center (Paducah, Kentucky)

The Seamen's Church Institute (a mission established by the Episcopal Church in 1840) has developed the River Heritage Center. The institute is currently installing a museum with interactive permanent and changing exhibits telling the story of the Four Rivers Region — a geographic region encompassing the Ohio, Cumberland, Tennessee, and Mississippi Rivers.

Addition: Paducah Wall to Wall: Paducah's History in Floodwall Murals (Paducah, Kentucky)

This display of art includes renowned artist Robert Dafford's paintings of Paducah's rich history. A visionary project, which has paintings on the river city's floodwall between Broadway and Jefferson Street, began in the spring of 1996. A 20-panel time line is slated for completion by the turn of the century.

APPENDIX C:**RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS****Concept 4: The People: Encountering the Cultural Diversity of the Lower Mississippi Delta Region****Addition: North Delta Museum (Friars Point, Mississippi)**

Description: The oldest established town in Coahoma County, the home of Conway Twitty, written of by William Faulkner, the site of many dances where W.C. Handy and his orchestra played, and visited by and written of by Charles Lindberg.

Concept 4: The People: Encountering the Cultural Diversity of the Lower Mississippi Delta Region**Addition: Ellsinore Pioneer Museum (Ellsinore, Missouri)**

Description: Community facility dedicated to preserving local history and pioneer heritage The museum is exploring the considerable Native American heritage remnants including stories of members of various dislocated tribes either settling, seeking refuge, or passing through the area.

MAPS

Study Area: Madison, Arkansas, has been added.
Ellsinore, Missouri, has been added.

Comprehensive Concept: Stories of the Delta: Madison, Arkansas, has been added.

Concept 2: Elephant Rock State Park in Iron County, Missouri, has been added.

Concept 4: The North Delta Museum (no. 52) in Friars Point, Mississippi, has been added.

Location of Madison has been changed to 3-4 miles from downtown Forest City. Highway 1 has been added.

Concept 9: Dillard Mill State Historic Site has been moved to show that it is 50 miles southeast of Rolla in Crawford County, Missouri.



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